



SLOVAKIA: HAVING FUN AND RAISING AWARENESS ON THE RIVER

Slovakia's Danube Day on June 22 saw a major celebration in Bratislava involving a huge number of governmental and non-governmental organisations all working together to make it a day of cultural celebration and coming together. Almost 500 children as well as families and other visitors enjoyed cultural performances and dances alongside scientific demonstrations and discussion forums; there was art, music, thought-provoking talks, and a chance to meet turtles!

Bratislava's own *Kessa* majorettes' troupe made sure the festival opened with a spectacular display, starting a day of fun water related activities on and beside the river. Competitions, knowledge quizzes and attractive professional lectures held throughout the event gave children and adults a unique opportunity to learn a lot of interesting information about the river. The Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute ran fun and informative demonstrations and activities at the water gauge station, and used mobile scientific equipment at other places along the river, where they demonstrated cutting edge methods used for measuring the quality and quantity of water. The Slovak Water Management Enterprise took 250 children from foster homes on a boating trip, to enjoy and learn about the Danube River. There was free entry to the Water Research institute, where short video-films and poster exhibitions taught people about the Danube and show the importance of water management and research, and the Bratislava Water Company also ran informative talks on waste management and drinking water. Many also enjoyed the Red Cross first aid demonstrations, some of them even having a go at administering first aid to a mannequin. Children also had an opportunity to see living animals – a python and a turtle – from the Zoological Garden in Bojnice town.

As well as these fascinating and informative activities, visitors also viewed demonstrations of skill and daring by the Metropolitan Police of Bratislava and the Slovak Republic Police Force. They were awed by falconry displays with an Imperial Eagle, hawks and ravens from Slovak Falcon Club. On the cultural side, youth dance and singing ensembles were present at the event, including the pupils of the Sklenárová Elementary Art School, UP TO DATE modern dance group, students from Ethno Drum School, the H&T Dance Club and the music group "Mäso a údeniny".

The Bratislava festival also saw the culmination of Slovakia's search for its young Danube Art Master of 2007. The overall winners were a group of pupils from Jelenia School in Bratislava, with "New Bridge", "Dragonfly from Primary Age", and "Turtle". After a grand prizegiving ceremony to these and other winners, the festival was rounded off with a fantastic concert from the winners of the Coca Cola PopStars competition.

As with previous years, Global Water Partnership organised Slovak children to create Danube Greetings - messages of international solidarity - to send out to everyone celebrating Danube Day. On June 23 the NGO "Colours" carried out a clean up of the Small Danube and Klatovske nature reserve - in total a length of 135km. More than 800 volunteers - mainly NGOs members, fisherman, hunters, young and elderly people - from 27 villages on Small Danube participated in this activity, demonstrating their commitment to working "Hand in Hand with the River".

"Water is the blood of life. Protect the river for the next generation."

Peter Visvader, Director of the Public Relation Department, Ministry of the Environment

ORGANISERS AND PARTNERS

Ministry of the Environment • Slovak Environmental Agency • Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute • Global Water Partnership Slovakia • Slovak Water Management Enterprise • Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology • ZOO Bojnice • Slovak Falcon´s Group • State Nature Conservation • Water-management Construction, Bratislava • Water Research Institute, Bratislava • Self-governing Region Bratislava • Municipality Bratislava • Bratislava Water Company • Bratislava Fire and Rescue Service • Bratislava River Police Department • Metropolitan Police, Bratislava • Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, Bratislava • Slovakian Red Cross • Danube Environmental Forum • Daphne • NGO Colours • Coca-Cola Slovakia • Enviromagazín • Recar Bratislava • Volkswagen Slovakia • Nestlé • Microcomp • Zapadoslovenska energetika EON • TRISTAN • Bratislava Culture and Information Centre • LOD j.s.c.